

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 DRC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAB-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8924

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7974

GENEVA FOR MPPC DEL

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS XF

SUBJECT: MOVES AFOOT TO RESOLVE JORDANIAN-FEDAYEEN DIFFERENCES

SUMMARY: CURRENT INTER-ARAB MOVES TO RECONCILE PLO-JORDANIAN DIFFERENCES PRIOR TO ARAB SUMMIT MEETING IN SEPTEMBER AND NEXT STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS AT GENEVA COULD, IF SUCCESSFUL, OBVIOUSLY ENHANCE PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS IN ME SETTLEMENT EFFORT. AT SAME
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TIME, THEY POSE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS FOR PARTIES DIRECTLY

CONCERNED, AS WELL AS FOR LEBANESE GOVT. END SUMMARY.

1. IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT CONSIDERABLE INTER-ARAB EFFORTS ARE EITHER ALREADY UNDERWAY OR WILL SHORTLY BEGIN ON SEVERAL FRONTS TO RECONCILE PLO LEADERSHIP WITH JORDANIAN GOVT. SINCE LATE JUNE, BEIRUT PRESS HAS BEEN CARRYING REPORTS OF RENEWED ARAB EFFORTS TO MEDIATE BETWEEN FEDAYEEN AND JOJ AS PRELUDE TO ARAB MINI-SUMMIT MEETING TO COORDINATE STRATEGY FOR NEXT STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS AT GENEVA. RIGHT-WING AL HAYAAT CLAIMED ON JULY 1 THAT HTIS HAD BEEN ONE OF PRIME PURPOSES OF SYRIAN FOMIN KHADDAM'S RECENT VISIT TO AMMAN. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SARG SPOKESMEN SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED THIS, PRESENCE OF 'ARAFAT IN DAMASCUS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER KHADDAM'S TRIP SUGGESTS THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOMETHING TO HAYAAT'S REPORT.) AT ABOUT SAME TIME, INDEPENDENT AN NAHAR REPORTED MOROCCAN EFFORTS TO PALY BROKER BETWEEN JOJ AND PLO, WHILE LEBYAN-BACKED AS SAFIR SPOKE OF SIMILAR EFFORTS BY EGYPT. IN ADDITION, PRO-FEDAYEEN AL MUHARRIR CLAIMED THAT SAUDI MEDICATION WAS BEING PLANNED.

2. ANOTHER STRONG HINT THAT RECONCILIATION EFFORTS WERE IN THE WIND, AT LEAST, WAS GIVEN BY PLO WEEKLY, PALESTINE REVOLUTION ON JULY 3. IN LONG EDITORIAL PROMISING THAT FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT WOULD "CONTINUE FOIL IMPERIALIST PLOTS AIMED AT DESTROYING PAKESTINIAN NATION", INCLUDING THAT OF SUBJUGATING IT TO JORDANIAN REGIME, MAGAZINE WARNED THAT WHILE PLO "WILL NEVER TREAT WITH KING KUSSEIN, HISTORIC ENEMY OF ARAB LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND INSTRUMENT OF IMPERIALIST REPRESSION, IT MUST BE READY TO COUNTER SURPRISE INITIATIVES FROM AMMAN BEFORE NEXT ARAB SUMMIT MEETING IN SEPTEMBER".

3. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND OF SPECULATION AND RUMOR, PLO EX COMM MET HERE JULY 9 TO CONSIDER, AS ONE OF MAJOR ITEMS REPORTEDLY ON ITS AGENDA, "PROPOSED RECONCILIATION BETWEEN PLO AND JORDAN". LOCAL MEDIA, DRAWING ON PALESTINE REVOLUTION EDITORIAL MENTIONED ABOVE, PREDICTED FEDAYEEN LEADERSHIP WOULD CONTINUE TO

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INSIST ON FOLLOWING TRADITIONAL PLO CONDITIONS FOR ANY RAPPROACHEMENT WITH GUJ: (A) RECOGNITION OF PLO AS SOLE LEGITIMATE REP OF PALESTINIANS, AND (B) IMPLEMENTATION OF 1970 CAIRO AND AMMAN AGREEMENT WITH GOJ AND RETURN OF FEDAYEEN UNITS TO EAST JORDAN.

4. COMMENT: (A) FROM WHAT WE RECALL OF PAST EFFORTS TO RECONCILE FEDAYEEN AND GOJ, AS WELL AS WHAT WE KNOW OF

PRESENT ATTITUDES ON THIS QUESTION IN FEDAYEEN RANKS AND--THANKS TO EMBASSY AMMAN'S PAST REPORTING--AMONG JORDANIANS, IT STRIKES US THAT NEITHER SIDE IS LIKELY TO VIEW RAPPROACHMENT IDEA WITH JOY. HOWEVER, SEEMS LIKELY THAT NEW DETERMINATION MAY EXIST AMONG THOSE ARAB STATES ANXIOUS TO SEE FURTHER PROGRESS IN ME SETTLEMENT EFFORT TO REDUCE, IF NOT RESOLVE ENTIRELY, DIVISIVE AND POTENTIALLY HARMFUL DISCORD BETWEEN PLO AND GOJ. WE THUS WOULD EXPECT BOTH PARTIES WILL FIND IT NECESSARY TO GO THROUGH MOTIONS OF SEEKING RECONCILIATION IN ORDER KEEP ON GOOD TERMS WITH ARAB STATES WHOSE GOODWILL THEY VALUE AND ON WHOSE SUPPORT THEY DEPEND.

(B) WE ARE CERTAIN THAT PLO/EC WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN CONVENED TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT UNLESS 'ARAFAT AND CO. HAD VERY PARTICULAR REASONS FOR DOING SO--E.G., PRESSURE FROM EGYPT AND/OR SYRIA, ASSURANCE OF ARAB SUPPORT IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH HUSSEIN, ETC. TOPIC OF RELATIONS WITH JORDAN IS NOT ONE FOR CASUAL DEBATE AMONG FEDAYEEN LEADERSHIP. NEVERTHELESS, WITH 'ARAFAT ALREADY SUSPECTED (AND RIGHTLY SO) BY HIS DIE-HARD FEDAYEEN RIVALS OF BEING READY TO COMPROMISE PLO "PRINCIPLES"--INCLUDING THOSE RE ENMITY TO HASHEIITES--IN RETURN FOR SOME KIND OF ASSOCIATION WITH ME SETTLEMENT EFFORT, HE APPEARS BE WALKING YET ANOTHER SHAKY TIGHT-ROPE BY EVEN ALLOWING SUBJECT TO BE RAISED IN PLO/EC. AS NOTED ABOVE, HOWEVER, HE DARES NOT ALIENATE ARAB GOVTS BY ADOPTING TOTALLY NEGATIVE LINE RE RAPPROACHMENT WITH GOJ THAT MIGHT CAUSE THEM RECONSIDER THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD PLO MODERATES" AND PRHAPS RISK HAVING EGYPT AND SYRIA PROCEED TO GENEVA WITHOUT HIM. 'ARAFAT'S DILEMMA ALSO HEIGHTENED BY KNOWLEDGE THAT IF HE AND OTHER FEDAYEEN "MODERATES" SHOULD SHOW
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THEMSELVES TO DIE-HARDS AS TOO KEEN ON RECONCILIATION WITH GOJ, THEY COULD BE SIGNING THEIR OWN DEATH WARRANTS. AT VERY LEAST, THEY WOULD BE PROVOKING SHOW-DOWN WITHIN FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT WITHOUT HAVING SECURED ANY TANGIBLE ADVANTAGE AS JUSTIFICATION FOR DOING SO.

(C) OCCURS TO US THAT 'ARAFAT'S UPCOMING VISIT TO MOSCOW MAY IN PART BE FOR PURPOSE OF OBTAINING SOV ASSISTANCE IN EASING HIS DILEMMA. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF HE WERE TO MAKE STRONG PITCH FOR SOV HELP IN RESTRAINING OR EVEN COMBATTING IRAQ, LIBYA AND FEDAYEEN "REJECTIONISTS", IN PRESSURING EGYPT AND SYRIAN TO ADOPT TOUGHTER LINE WITH JORDAN (NOT TO MENTION US AND ISRAEL PRIOR TO NEXT STAGE AT GENEVA),

AND IN FORM OF INCREASED AID TO FEADYEEN "MODERATES".

(D) EMBASSY AMMAN'S COMMENT ON FOREGOING, ESPECIALLY ITS ANALYSIS OF GOJ ATTITUDE AND STRATEGY, WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL. WE WOULD ONLY NOTE THAT FROM POINT OF VIEW OF LEBANESE GOVT--WHOSE LEADERS FERVENTLY WISH THAT SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE COULD DEVISE ARRANGEMENTS THAT WOULD HAVE EFFECT OF COOLING FEDAYEEN AGITATION AND ACTIVITY IN LEBANON--SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF EFFORTS TO PATCH UP PLO-GOJ DIFFERENCES CAN HAVE EQUALLY UNWELCOME EFFECTS. SHOULD SUCH EFFORTS FAIL AND LEAD TO SITUATION IN WHICH FEDAYEEN "MODERATES" FIND THEMSELVES EXCLUDED FROM ANY PARTICIPATORY ROLE IN ME SETTLEMENT PROCESS, LEBANON WOULD BEAR BRUNT OF FEDAYEEN ANGER AND OF THEIR CONCERTED ATTEMPTS TO SPOIL SETTLEMENT EFFORT. ON OTHER HAND, SHOULD SOME SORT OF PLO-GOJ RAPPROCHEMENT BE ACHIEVED, LEBANON IS ALSO LIKELY TO BECOME SCENE OF INTER-FEDAYEEN HOSTILITIES GENERATED BY ENSURING OPEN SPLIT BETWEEN PALESINIAN "MODERATES" AND DIE-HARDS. GODLEY

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